

## Statement of the Jury Panel

We have been very pleased with the large turnout in the competition, with 23 internationally submitted proposals - including participants from 36 different countries - and an average of over 70 participants at each of the 4 virtual events which were organized since the launch of the competition, in July 2020. This level of participation confirms the commitment towards Land Degradation Neutrality, which is currently the largest global restoration initiative, with 450 million hectares of land pledged for restoration by over 70 countries. It also demonstrates the value of coordination efforts such as the GEO LDN Initiative.

We would like to thank all three finalist teams for their outstanding efforts, their contribution towards more transparent and well-informed land use planning and management, and their commitment to solving one of the world's greatest environmental challenges. We were very impressed by the quality and the diversity of the three finalist tools, with approaches ranging from neural networks to expert knowledge. Through the direct engagement and co-development of the tools with end users from Africa, Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean, the three finalist teams created tools that have the potential to better address the specific context, behaviors and expectations of the people who will directly interact with the technology. Especially in these difficult times, the competition provided an indispensable space for innovation and collaborative action.

Identifying the winner from the three finalists was extremely difficult. Of the tools presented, the LUP4LDN tool is the most innovative and the most directly responsive to the Competition's challenge. LUP4LDN moves beyond analyzing data - it brings stakeholders together. It directly facilitates collaborative land use planning and the process guidance provided is applicable globally. We recognize the value of the tool for training land use planners towards embedding LDN in planning processes. The tool is flexible, well structured, and enables the analysis of land use trade-offs using bespoke or existing data, or based on expert knowledge, and supports connection with Trends.Earth. The winning Team has provided a workplan to implement this tool with complete functionality for selected locations by May 2021, with global implementation in October and capacity building activities commencing in November.

The winning Team will benefit from financial and technical support valued at USD 100,000; we trust this prize will enable them to achieve scale and support widespread adoption of the LUP4LDN tool by new users, new communities and new countries.

We are firmly convinced that integrated land use planning is a key element to balance environmental, economic and social priorities, and ultimately to achieve Land Degradation Neutrality.